

Change is vital. We must remind ourselves that the war with Iraq was not a mistake but rather a flagrant abuse of power by our leaders—and a case of shameful negligence by the rest of us for letting it happen. The consequence is more than a quagmire. The consequence is the death of our national treasure—our soldiers.

We are all accountable. We all share the responsibility of what has been destroyed in our name. Let us begin to right the wrongs we have done to our country by accepting that responsibility.

TRIBUTE TO OSSIE DAVIS

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a distinguished actor, director, producer, screenwriter, playwright and historian. Ossie Davis was an incredible man whose life's work, both on and off screen, promoted the advancement of civil rights and humanitarian causes.

Mr. Davis' most important role may well have been as husband. He and his wife, also a prominent actor, Ruby Dee, celebrated 50 years of marriage together in 1998. Both were among those selected to receive Kennedy Center Honors in 2004.

The pair met during Davis' Broadway debut in the play *Jeb Turner*. Both promoted the cause of blacks in the entertainment industry and are well known for their portrayals of characters faced with racial injustice.

My thoughts and prayers are with Ms. Dee, for her loss is truly a loss for us all.

TRIBUTE TO THE HEROIC MEN AND WOMEN OF THE 415TH CIVIL AFFAIRS BATTALION OF THE U.S. ARMY RESERVE

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the heroic men and women of the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion of the U.S. Army Reserve who have recently returned home after serving their country in Iraq. The sacrifices that these heroes made to protect and secure our country will never be forgotten and we are forever in their debt.

The 415th Civil Affairs Battalion is based out of Kalamazoo, Michigan with soldiers coming from throughout the Midwest. Over the last 7 years this battalion has been deployed five times, and is considered to be one of the most deployed battalions in the active or reserve of the Army. During their time in Iraq these selfless individuals rebuilt schools, worked with the creation of water treatment plants and Iraqi hospitals.

I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy for the loss of two of their comrades, SPC Nichole Frye and CPT Paul Cassidy. They will always remain in our memories and their families will be in our thoughts and prayers.

With our forces fighting overseas today, we are vividly reminded of the debt of gratitude

we owe our men and women in uniform who serve our country. The 415th Civil Affairs Battalion is a glowing example of the greatness of our forces and on behalf of the Sixth District of Michigan; I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation for their service.

VETERANS BENEFITS CUTS AND BUDGET PROPOSAL

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, is nothing sacred in this Administration's budget? At a time when our greatest generation is relying more and more on the VA to provide health services and our newest veterans are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, the White House is proposing to slash their benefits and force them to pay ever increasing premiums. What happened to keeping promises to our nation's veterans?

With the constantly rising cost of health care, the proposed funding falls well short of what is needed for our veterans. These veterans paid their service to our Nation and they earned a lifetime of health care coverage—we promised it to them. Now, as the President wants to spend trillions of dollars to privatize Social Security, he also wants to break that promise and make veterans pay for their healthcare again!

The absurdity of this would be laughable if it weren't such a serious and disturbing proposal.

Thomas P. Cadmus, the National Commander of the American Legion sees and understands the absurdity of this as well. He said, and I quote:

"It is incomprehensible that our veterans will pay for the shortfall in VA health-care funding from their own pockets as tax dollars flow out the back door of America."

And these tax dollars aren't just flowing out the back door of America in additional foreign aid funding, they are also flowing out the front door in the form of tax cuts for the wealthiest one percent of our Nation.

We have the money to keep our promise to our veterans and I urge the White House to reevaluate the budget and make the changes needed to reinforce the promise to our veterans.

I am also enclosing a press release from The American Legion which I submit for the RECORD to accompany my remarks.

LEGION LEADER SAYS PROPOSED BUDGET REACHES DEEP INTO VETERANS' POCKETS

WASHINGTON, February 7, 2005.—The leader of the nation's largest military veterans organization reacted strongly to the effects that President Bush's budget plan will have on veterans. He called it a smoke screen to raise revenue at the expense of veterans.

"This is not acceptable," said Thomas P. Cadmus, national commander of the 2.7 million-member American Legion. "It's nothing more than a health care tax designed to increase revenue at the expense of veterans who served their country."

Cadmus was referring to the portion of the proposed budget that would double the co-payment charge to many veterans for prescription drugs and would require some to pay a new fee of \$250 a year to use their own their own health care system.

"Is the goal of these legislative initiatives to drive those veterans paying for their health care away from the system designed to serve veterans?" Cadmus asked. "The President is asking Congress to make 'health care poaching' legal in the world's largest health care delivery system."

"When the President first came to Washington, among his first official acts was to triple the prescription co-payment from \$2 to \$7," Cadmus said. "Once again, the President wants to double the co-payment and fortunately, Congress has wisely rejected that proposal. Making veterans pay for timely access to quality health care is wrong."

This is the third year in a row the President has attempted to establish an enrollment fee for those veterans making co-payments and third-party reimbursements to the VA.

"Many of these veterans are Medicare-eligible and already paying the federal government for their part A and B coverage, so why should they have to pay an additional enrollment fee? VA can't even bill Medicare," Cadmus said. "Other veterans with private health insurance make co-payments and then VA is reimbursed for services. Again, why should they be forced to pay an additional \$250 to go to VA medical facilities?"

"During my visits to VA hospitals, I have not run into Bill Gates, Donald Trump, or Ross Perot seeking care. I see mostly veterans—many on small fixed incomes—trying to make ends meet and exercising their very best health care option," Cadmus observed.

"Veterans' health care is an ongoing expense of war," he added. "You don't thank veterans for serving their country and then tell them, 'By the way, better not get wounded or you'll have to pay extra for your health care.' This is offensive to every veteran in America. That is why this government must move VA health care out from under the umbrella of discretionary spending to mandatory spending," Cadmus stressed.

The American Legion has requested a \$3.5 billion increase in health care spending in FY 2006. The President is proposing \$9.5 billion in foreign aid, about \$2.1 billion more than the current level.

"As young Americans in uniform battle terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as 119 other countries, it is incomprehensible that our veterans will pay for the shortfall in VA health care funding from their own pockets as tax dollars flow out the back door of America," Cadmus said.

"We reminded the President of our position on veterans' health care needs during his campaign and I personally testified on the issue on Capitol Hill last September," Cadmus added. "Our budget request is very realistic when you consider the Secretary has slammed the door in the face of hundreds of thousands of veterans eligible, but currently forbidden from seeking quality care from VA."

"The current appropriations process is broken and is not adequately funding VA medical care," Cadmus said. "President George W. Bush's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans on May 26, 2003, identified the mismatch between demand and funding as a major obstacle in meeting the nation's commitment to veterans. The American Legion and nine other veterans' organizations believe the answer lies in changing VA health care funding from discretionary to mandatory appropriation."

"No active-duty service member in harm's way should ever have to question the nation's commitment to veterans. This is the wrong message at the wrong time to the wrong constituency."

OPPOSITION TO AN ANTI-SECESSION LAW PROPOSED BY THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong opposition to an Anti-Secession Law that is being proposed by the People's Republic of China. While some positive developments in cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan have occurred recently, the consideration of an Anti-Secession Law by Beijing threatens to disrupt the status-quo. Recently, an agreement was reached by both governments to allow historic non-stop charter flights between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan during February's Lunar New Year holiday. And the arrival on February 1 of a delegation from China to pay their respects to the late negotiator Koo Chen-fu, former Chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, has been a welcome development as well. Unfortunately, China's National People's Congress Standing Committee is considering a bill that is expected to set up a legal framework to provide for the incorporation of Taiwan by China. This legislation, however, could be interpreted to legally require Beijing to move unilaterally against Taiwan in the event Beijing construed any acts or statements by Taipei as a move toward independence.

I have deep reservations about an Anti-Secession Law. Beijing until now has considered Taiwan to be a part of China but has refrained from attempting to legally extend its sovereignty over it. While this position leaves some flexibility for negotiations on unification, I fear that the enactment of this new measure will restrict the debate. In addition, there would also be great uncertainty among the thousands of Taiwanese who work on the mainland. Would Taiwanese businessmen in China run the risk of being jailed for actions interpreted as being supportive of Taiwanese authorities? Reactions from Taiwan to the proposed law have been universally negative among all of Taiwan's political parties and leaders. At a time when the differences between Beijing and Taipei can best be resolved through dialogue, the enactment of this legislation would make the resumption of these negotiations more difficult and inevitably increase tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

Both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan have a vital interest in maintaining peace in the region. My hope is that China will not enact an Anti-Secession Law or take any step, for that matter, which might prompt a confrontation in the Taiwan Strait.

PROMOTING HEART HEALTH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, heart disease is the leading cause of death for all Americans—more than 70 million Americans, one in four, suffers from heart disease, stroke or another cardiovascular disease. For women, heart disease is responsible for more deaths than the

next seven causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer. And shockingly, only 8 percent of women think that heart disease is a major personal concern.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to help get the message out, to call attention to heart health and to encourage men and women to learn about the signs and causes of cardiovascular disease. This past Friday, the American Heart Association sponsored "Go Red for Women" day to raise awareness and help women take back control of their personal health. Women in particular must educate themselves to know the risk factors they can control: diabetes, blood pressure, tobacco use, cholesterol, exercise and obesity. One in ten American women aged 45 to 64 and one in four American women aged 64 or older has some form of heart disease. Those numbers are way too high.

As the family gatekeeper, women do more than just improve their own health—they can put children and families on the path to a lifetime of good heart health. Childhood obesity and diabetes are pandemic in the U.S.—it's a trend we must stop by making sure our families are eating healthy and getting physical activity. These simple but important steps will mean a great deal to the future health of our families and our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I know you will join me in encouraging all Americans to contact the American Heart Association to find out the information that can save their lives.

TRIBUTE TO HELEN MAYHAK

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Helen Mayhak who regrettably passed away recently at the age of 91. A dedicated and selfless woman, Helen's charity and work throughout the community made Southwest Michigan an even greater place to live and grow.

For the last 40 years Helen served the Hartford community as township clerk, making her one of Michigan's longest-tenured officials. A lifelong resident of Berrien County, Helen was an active member in her community. Whether she was serving hot lunches to students in our public schools, working with the Boy Scouts of America, or assisting in our local hospitals, Helen did her part to improve the lives of everyone she encountered. As a member of the Van Buren Republican Party, she was honored as the Van Buren Republican of the Year.

Helen will be remembered for her commitment to the betterment of the lives of those she served. We will certainly miss her enthusiasm and passion that she brought to her work each and every day.

On behalf of the Sixth District of Michigan, our prayers and sincere regards go out to Helen's family and friends—she will certainly be deeply missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I received Unanimous Consent for an excused absence for February 1, 2005 and the balance of the week on account of family medical reasons, I witnessed the birth of my first grandchild Lauren Elissa Hewlett and I ask Unanimous Consent to include this personal explanation in the RECORD.

On February 1, 2005, I was unable to be present for Rollcall votes #14 and #15, and on February 2, 2005, I was unable to be present for Rollcall votes #16, #17, #18, and #19.

On Rollcall vote #14, a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H. Res. 23 "Honoring the contributions of Catholic schools," I would have voted "Yea."

On Rollcall vote #15, a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 120, "To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30777 Rancho California Road at Temecula, California, as the Dalip Singh Saund Post Office Building," I would have voted "Yea."

On Rollcall vote #16, agreeing to the Resolution H. Con. Res. 36, "Expressing the continued support of Congress for equal access of military recruiters to institutions of higher education," I would have voted "Yea."

On Rollcall vote #17, a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H. Res. 56, "Commending the Palestinian people for conducting a free and fair presidential election on January 9, 2005, and for other purposes," I would have voted "Yea."

On Rollcall vote #18, a Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H. Res. 57, "Expressing the strong concern of the House of Representatives that the European Union may end its embargo against the Peoples Republic of China," I would have voted "Yea."

On Rollcall vote #19, agreeing to the Resolution H. Res. 60, "Relating to the free election in Iraq held on January 30, 2005," I would have voted "Yea."

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, the President's budget is a blueprint of his priorities. A way of showing what direction he wants to move the country. Based on the last four years, it is no surprise that the President's budget is more of the same: continued tax cuts for the wealthy paid for by slashing programs that Americans depend on.

While the President has urged a return to fiscal discipline, he has been more of a culprit than a savior. This year's budget continues to move in the wrong direction, and the FY 2006 deficit will likely be the largest in history. The President's projected deficit is not even a credible accounting, as the budget completely omits the President's own plans for tax cuts, Social Security privatization, and fighting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These programs